

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A rubber dam frame comprising:

a thin, metal, bendable support member having an inner edge and an outer edge and being sized and configured so as to hold and maintain a rubber dam in a desired orientation relative to a patient's mouth;

wherein the support member is sufficiently bendable so as to allow a dental practitioner to bend a desired portion of the support member away from a patient's mouth during use so as to allow substantially unimpeded access to a desired area of the patient's mouth for performing x-rays or other procedures.

2. A rubber dam frame as recited in claim 1, further comprising barbs for retaining a rubber dam comprising a rubber sheet formed on said support member.

3. A rubber dam frame as recited in claim 2, wherein the barbs are formed on the outer edge of the bendable support member.

4. A rubber dam frame as recited in claim 2, wherein the barbs are formed within recesses within the support member between the inner and outer edges of the support member.

5. A rubber dam frame as recited in claim 2, wherein the rubber dam frame includes at least 3 barbs substantially evenly spaced around the support member.

6. A rubber dam frame as recited in claim 2, wherein the rubber dam frame includes at least 6 barbs substantially evenly spaced around the support member.

7. A rubber dam frame as recited in claim 2, wherein the rubber dam frame includes at least 10 barbs substantially evenly spaced around the support member.

8. A rubber dam frame as recited in claim 2, wherein the barbs extend outwardly and lie substantially in a plane defined by the support member prior to use.

9. A rubber dam frame as recited in claim 2, wherein the barbs extend laterally relative to the support member.

10. A rubber dam frame as recited in claim 1, the support member having a substantially circular configuration.

11. A rubber dam frame as recited in claim 1, wherein the support member comprises aluminum.

12. A rubber dam frame as recited in claim 11, wherein the aluminum comprises anodized aluminum.

13. A rubber dam frame as recited in claim 1, wherein the support member has a thickness in a range of about 0.005 inch to about 0.25 inch.

14. A rubber dam frame as recited in claim 1, wherein the support member has a thickness in a range of about 0.015 inch to about 0.062 inch.

15. A rubber dam frame as recited in claim 1, wherein the support member has a thickness in a range of about 0.02 inch to about 0.04 inch.

16. A rubber dam frame comprising:

a thin, metal, bendable support member having an inner edge and an outer edge; and

barbs on the support member configured so as to hold and maintain a rubber dam in a desired orientation relative to a patient's mouth;

wherein the support member is sufficiently bendable so as to allow a dental practitioner to bend a desired portion of the support member away from a patient's mouth during use so as to allow substantially unimpeded access to a desired area of the patient's mouth for performing x-rays or other procedures.

17. A rubber dam frame as recited in claim 16, wherein the support member comprises aluminum.

18. A rubber dam frame as recited in claim 16, the rubber dam frame comprising at least 6 barbs that are substantially evenly spaced.

19. A rubber dam frame comprising:

a thin, aluminum, bendable support member having an inner edge and an outer edge; and

at least barbs substantially evenly spaced on the support member and configured so as to hold and maintain a rubber dam in a desired orientation relative to a patient's mouth;

wherein the support member is sufficiently bendable so as to allow a dental practitioner to bend a desired portion of the support member away from a patient's mouth during use so as to allow substantially unimpeded access to a desired area of the patient's mouth for performing x-rays or other procedures.

20. A rubber dam kit comprising:

a rubber dam frame as recited in claim 1, and

a rubber dam material.